



REVIEW AT A GLANCE

NYPD's Oversight of the Body-Worn Camera Program

What questions did the review look at?

- ▶ Is NYPD's body-worn camera (BWC) program effectively implemented and monitored?
- ▶ Does NYPD respond to public requests for BWC footage (FOIL requests) in a timely, transparent manner?

Why does it matter for New Yorkers?

Body-worn cameras are a critical tool for ensuring that law enforcement acts with transparency and accountability, and for improving trust between the public and police. In 2019, all NYPD patrol officers began wearing BWCs. Under the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), the public has the right to access government records, and anyone can request BWC footage by submitting a FOIL request.

The review found that NYPD was chronically delayed in responding to FOIL requests for BWC footage. Over a four-year period (2020–2024), the department did not respond to 4,591 (85%) of 5,427 requests within a 25-business-day timeframe. More than half the time, NYPD did not meet its own internal goal to grant or deny requests within 95 business days. On average, it took NYPD 133 business days to grant or deny requests.

The review found that BWC activation rates are inconsistent. In a sample of over 12,000 videos on file, NYPD could not find footage for 4,319 (36%) of them. Similarly, officers either activated late or stopped recording early in 1,436 (18%) of almost 8,000 instances.

Finally, NYPD's own internal oversight needs improvement. Over half of precinct self-inspections were missing in sampled months, completion of stop report reviews (802 Worksheets) was limited, and use-of-force incidents were not always properly tracked through Threat, Resistance, or Injury (TRI) reports.

When BWCs are not activated or activated improperly, oversight of police actions can be weakened, especially in high-stakes situations like stops, searches, and uses of force. Additionally, delayed or denied access to footage can frustrate efforts by community advocates and oversight bodies to hold law enforcement accountable.

What changes is the agency considering following the audit?

- ▶ NYPD agreed that there is a need to boost staffing of its Legal Bureau to address FOIL requests promptly.
- ▶ NYPD agreed to ensure that all officers on patrol are provided with cameras and investigate causes of lower activation rates in certain boroughs.
- ▶ NYPD agreed to ensure that all use-of-force incidents are adequately documented.

REVIEW FINDINGS



NYPD's FOIL response times are extremely slow and regularly exceed standard timeframes.



BWC activation rates are inconsistent—36% of sampled incidents had no corresponding footage.



Use-of-Force incidents are not always tracked properly.



Review Recommendations		Agency Response
1	Increase Legal Bureau staffing levels and make additional efforts to address FOIL requests timely.	AGREED
2	Provide timely notice to requesters that a required 160.50 waiver document is missing.	AGREED
3	Take steps to ensure that all officers who perform patrol duties are immediately provided with cameras.	AGREED
4	Formalize a policy for conducting ICAD reviews including the number, frequency, and sampling plan of reviews, and include in the methodology that ICAD interactions that are not required to be recorded be excluded from the reviews and replaced with additional samples.	AGREED
5	Investigate causes of lower activation rates in certain boroughs and precincts and take steps to ensure they continue to improve across the City.	AGREED
6	Conduct an overall assessment of its BWC program to determine whether the program has improved compliance with policies, regulations, and laws, including respectful interaction with the public.	AGREED ¹
7	Aggregate the results of its various BWC reviews (e.g., ICAD reviews, Self-Inspections, 802 Worksheets, etc.) to identify anomalies or trends and address them accordingly.	AGREED
8	Ensure that Self-Inspections are completed monthly as required.	AGREED
9	Ensure independent reviews of Self-Inspections are conducted by PSD.	AGREED
10	Ensure that 802 Worksheets are completed monthly as required.	AGREED
11	Take additional steps to ensure compliance with its Stop/Frisk policy by identifying improper stops.	AGREED ²
12	Review a sample of BWC footage from Level 2 and Level 3 Investigative Encounters to determine whether force was used and whether a TRI Report was completed, as required.	UNDER CONSIDERATION
13	Ensure that TRI reports are completed for all use-of-force incidents.	AGREED ³

¹ NYPD essentially agreed with this recommendation, indicating that it reflects its current practice.

² NYPD essentially agreed with this recommendation, indicating that it reflects its current practice.

³ NYPD essentially agreed with this recommendation, indicating that it reflects its current practice.